



Your Energy Connection

Rocky Mount Public Utilities



Natural Gas Awareness Survey Coming in December

Citizens of Rocky Mount and the surrounding areas will be part of a telephone survey regarding natural gas awareness. A new federal regulation requires natural gas utilities to assess how effective its public education efforts are in communicating important natural gas safety information to customers and the public. This will be accomplished by a telephone survey conducted by a firm named QuestFore beginning approximately the first week of December. As a utility, the city of Rocky Mount wants to make sure everything is being done to ensure the public's safety.

Each utility company is required to provide a written plan of how this effectiveness assessment will be accomplished and how the process will produce a statistically-valid measure of the safety knowledge of customers and non-customers near distribution lines. Rocky Mount Public Utilities has chosen to participate in a program offered by the American Public Gas Association named GOAL (Gas Overall Awareness Level). Such effectiveness assessments are required by new pipeline safety regulations.

The telephone survey will be conducted by an automated telephone polling system that will call a random sample of residences in this area and record the response to a series of gas safety questions. The survey takes less than five minutes to complete. Rocky Mount Public Utilities will receive a report summarizing the answers to each question of its customers, non-customers and national participants.

The first survey is not required until 2010, but the city of Rocky Mount is participating now to get a survey that will provide a baseline against which future results will be compared. Utility companies will be expected to show improvement in the level of public gas safety knowledge from one survey to the next.

Rich Worsinger, Director of Public Utilities said, "We want to be ahead of the game and find out how to improve our service and the safety of our customers now. Our goal is to always safely provide better service to our customers."

Some natural gas facts for customers to know:

- If a customer smells gas in or around their home, they should immediately leave their home and call 972-1278 from a neighbor's house to report a gas leak
- The customer should never light a match, turn on a light or use a cell phone where they suspect a gas leak
- If you are planning to dig on your property, call the North Carolina One-Call Center at **1-800-632-4949** at least two working days in advance to find out if there are underground lines you need to avoid. The NC One-Call Center operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. **This one phone call could save you from disrupted service, expensive repairs, or personal injury.**

BEAT THE PEAK

“Peak” or “Peak Demand” is the greatest amount of electricity used at one time by an electric system, normally when a large number of customers are using appliances at the same time. By controlling the electric load or load management, we can keep electric costs in control. Rocky Mount averages approximately less than 10 days per month load managing. There are several options available:

Electric Water Heater Control

Water heaters are cycled off during load management periods. Controlling water heaters will not affect the amount of hot water available. Customers receive **\$2.00** credit each month.

Electric Heat Strip Control

Heat strips are controlled during the winter load management periods, while compressors continue to provide heat. Customers receive **\$15.00** credit each month if the temperature falls to 25 degrees or below on a non-holiday weekday.

Central Air Conditioning Total Control

Customers receive **\$20.00** credit each month for July, August, and September. The compressor is turned off for the entire load management period. Fans will continue to circulate the cool air in your house, but your compressor will not generate any new cool air.

There are no installation or maintenance charges associated with this program.

**Call 972-1283 for more information .
Start your savings now!**



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What You Don't Know Can Hurt You

Using space heaters to heat your home this winter will result in higher electric bills. In fact, if you use one small (1500 watt) space heater in your home for one month, it could add more than \$100 to your monthly electric bill. And that is just to heat one room! Help conserve energy and lower your monthly electric bill with the following tips:

- Keep your thermostat at the lowest comfortable setting—68 degrees is recommended in the winter. Each additional degree adds about three percent to your energy costs.
- Limit use of portable space heaters, which are not energy efficient and will result in higher electric bills.
- Space heaters are expensive and will not heat a large area.
- Insulate windows and caulk around doors and windows—one-third of a home's total heat can be lost through windows and doors.
- Check your home's insulation. If your home has little or no ceiling insulation, consider adding some.
- Set your water heater to 120 degrees
- To keep air circulating freely, check filters at least every month and change them when needed. Also, clean dust and lint from air outlets. Use permanent sealant (such as Mastic) to seal leaky supply and return ducts. Install duct insulation and cover with a vapor barrier.
- If you're going away for a few days, lower the thermostat, but don't turn the heat off. A cold snap could freeze your pipes.
- Install door sweeps to block cold air coming under doors.
- Install storm windows and doors or use plastic kits.
- Replace broken or cracked window panes.
- Vacuum refrigerator coils to make your refrigerator run more efficiently.
- Use smaller appliances such as a microwave or toaster oven instead of your full sized oven.
- When running your dishwasher, use the energy-saving cycle and run only when full.
- Wash and dry full loads of clothes.
- Clean the lint filter after each use of your dryer.
- Turn off lights when leaving a room.
- Consider Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs). CFL's use a fraction of the energy of traditional incandescent light bulbs and last up to ten times as long.
- Keep lamps and fixtures clean.
- Fix leaky faucets immediately.
- Don't leave the water running when shaving or brushing your teeth.
- Wash and rinse your laundry in cold water.
- Take short showers instead of baths and install low-flow shower heads.

For more information about Rocky Mount Public Utilities see our website at:
www.ci.rocky-mount.nc.us

Newsletters from previous months are available online.